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GREENFIELD — Rep. Charlie Bass visited the Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center's wood chip fueled central heat and hot water plant Thursday morning as part of his April tour of energy efficient companies in New Hampshire.

The 2nd district Republican has been using his April work period to observe the energy innovations that are both more energy efficient and cleaner, including systems that combine heat and power technology.

Like Velcro U.S.A in Manchester, the goal is to be "off the grid forever," Bass said, by generating its own electricity.

On this tour, Bass is touting his [Smart Energy Act legislation](#), which he introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in January. The bill would establish a strategic plan to double electricity production by 2020 through the use of combined heat and power and waste heat recovery.

Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center specializes in treating and educating brain injured children and adults.

The capacity to be energy self-sufficient is important to Crotched Mountain, said CEO and President Donald Shumway.

While the center now uses electricity from a power line and has diesel-run generators as a backup, it plans to produce its own electricity using its wood chip fueled central heat and hot water plant.

Since the plant was started almost six years ago, it has saved the center \$1.7 million in energy costs. The cost of running the plant would be equivalent to paying 63 cents a gallon for oil, Shumway said. "That's an extreme savings."

The plant is also extremely clean, Shumway said. "Just smell it."

Ash generated by the plant is used by farmers as fertilizer.

Bass said aside from transporting the wood chips, the plant is carbon neutral. "These are sustainably harvested wood chips."

Shumway said Crotched Mountain's plans to create its own electricity in the plant are cost prohibitive right now, but said Bass' Smart Energy Act would make the technology more accessible and affordable, which would make it more attractive to investors.

"This kind of technology needs to be implemented at a commercial level, shopping centers. Or on a municipal level, school systems, which has been done in many places in New Hampshire, and also at the federal level," Bass said.

Bass said his bill would mandate the federal government be "first users" in the new technology. Also the bill would implement an innovative funding mechanism in which private investment dollars could be leveraged with federal, state and local dollars, "to share the potential revenue, but to share the risk and also the reward with private investors. It's a relatively new investment concept that really should be developed."